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# A Memorial of Edward Everett:

A

## DISCOURSE

PREACHED IN

THE FIRST CHURCH, DORCHESTER,

SUNDAY, JAN. 22, 1865.

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BY NATHANIEL HALL.

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BOSTON:  
WALKER, WISE, AND COMPANY,  
245, WASHINGTON STREET.  
EBENEZER CLAPP,  
308, WASHINGTON STREET.  
1865.

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DORCHESTER, Jan. 24, 1865.

Rev. NATHANIEL HALL.

DEAR SIR, — The undersigned, members of the First Parish, respectfully request the publication of your sermon, preached last Sunday morning, in commemoration of the Hon. EDWARD EVERETT; believing that it will be a fit and appropriate memorial of the superior character and invaluable labors of our late illustrious citizen, as a Christian gentleman and a true patriot. This town being the birth-place of the great departed statesman and orator, it would seem but just and proper that this noble tribute to his memory should be put in a more permanent form.

THOMAS GROOM.  
DANIEL DENNY.  
JNO. H. ROBINSON.  
FRANKLIN KING.  
ELISHA T. LORING.  
J. C. LINDSLEY.  
FRED. W. G. MAY.  
EBENEZER CLAPP.

DORCHESTER, Jan. 25, 1865.

GENTLEMEN,

In deference to your judgment, I comply with your request, and place my sermon in your hands for publication.

Respectfully,

NATHL. HALL.

To THOMAS GROOM, DANIEL DENNY, and others.

## S E R M O N.

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“FOR, BEHOLD, THE LORD, THE LORD OF HOSTS, DOTI TAKE AWAY FROM JERUSALEM AND FROM JUDAH THE STAY AND THE STAFF, THE HONORABLE MAN AND THE COUNSELLOR, AND THE ELOQUENT ORATOR.” — Isa. iii. 3.

I SHALL not soon forget the feelings with which I heard, on leaving my pulpit last Sunday morning, that EDWARD EVERETT *was dead*. The tidings, I confess — whether worthily so or not — were peculiarly depressing to me; the day wore thenceforth a cloud, above whose shadows I could not rise. And since, throughout the week, the event has been almost continually in mind, the commanding point of thought and reflection. I would speak of him here; well assured that I am addressing those who have felt with me the shock of the event, and with whom it has also been the week's absorbing theme,—as where, indeed, has it not been? as, from point to point, the tidings have flown through the Great Republic that claimed him as its son; claimed a common ownership in his fame, as it had enjoyed a common benefit from his labors. I feel that the departure of one of gifts

and a career so remarkable, and who has occupied, and so honorably, such eminent posts in the public service, has claims upon the pulpit which it has no option but to attempt to meet.

And there are considerations of a local nature which seem to demand, peculiarly, a mention of him here. Our town claims him as hers, in the fact of his birth within it; our church as hers, in the fact of his name's enrolment on its records. Within the present home of one of us he first saw the light. At the hands of my predecessor he received baptism, — brought hither for that purpose, as the Record shows, on the second day of his life. In this immediate neighborhood was passed his earlier boyhood. At our public schools began his mental training, — the training of that intellect which was to command, by the wealth of its acquisitions and the splendor of its effusions, the admiration of his generation, and of others beyond it; that intellect — receptive rather than creative — which drew into itself, with such marvellous retention, the world's knowledges; which roamed, with gleaming sickle, the fields of all its literatures; which bore away from every mine of thought, by the election of a cultured taste and a native appreciativeness, their choicest gems, — not to overlay, but to enrich and quicken, and become basis and inspiration of new forms of beauty and new utterances of wisdom.

As we think of the boy, — whom there are those among us that remember, with his fair face, and curly hair, and marked intelligence ; as we go further back, and think of the babe, borne hither, from maternal arms, in blank unconsciousness ; and then think of the man, — scholar, orator, statesman, — these among the world's foremost ; as we think of that little brow, bared for that baptismal dew, and then wearing the wreath of a world-accorded fame ; of those lips, knowing no language but the inarticulate plaint of physical unrest, and then holding crowds in breathless silence by the magic of their speech ; as we think of the infant, in his cradle, and the man, in "Liberty's Cradle," lifting, with beaming intellect and glowing heart, his last public plea ; and then consider the insignificant space that separates these two conditions ; that for all this unfolding those few short years were a sufficing term ; that, moreover, all this is but basis and preparation for accelerated growth ; the showing of the first few morning hours of a day, whose sun, for ever ascending, finds never its zenith, — what impressiveness does the conception gain of the capabilities, the greatness, of the human soul, — the possibilities of its future, — the wonders of its destiny !

I shall attempt no studied eulogy of the eminent man departed, nor a portraiture, even in outline, of his remarkable career. My purpose is the far hum-

bler one, of presenting some of the points in which his memory claims our especial honor, in which his example has instruction and incentive for us. The air is full of eulogy of him: most of it, doubtless, spontaneous and heartfelt; but much, as is always in like cases, labored and indiscriminating, — a rhetorical marshalling of unqualified superlatives, for whose truth they who use them have no data in their personal knowledge, but only in the supposed public estimate. One can hardly help being offended at the looseness, for the most part, of the eulogium, at their decease, of distinguished men. Where indeed it is the heart's estimate, excess is pardonable, and more than pardonable. There is something beautiful in that obliviousness of the heart to deficiencies and defects, when the individual is no more; that disposition to see only the praiseworthy and the good; to see the life in its leading purpose, and not in its infrequent aberrations from it; reversing thus the rule at other times, of allowing its aberrations to put from view its leading purpose. There is something beautiful in this, seen as an instinct of our being; the verdict that throbs forth from the deeps of the emotional nature. We can pardon and honor the *heart's* partial estimate; but not the attempt, deliberate and unimpassioned, to paint the life other than it was, confounding eternal distinctions.

Certainly, few have lived among us, very few of

eminent position, whose public eulogium was less likely to be discrepant from sober fact than is his whom we mourn. Few have lived among us — have lived anywhere — in the occupancy, through a long life, of such various and distinguished posts, setting him, all of them, in the public gaze; clothing him with large authority and weighty trusts; mingling him with conflicting interests and passions and prejudices; demanding of him an impartial judgment, an even-handed justice, a firm resoluteness, — demanding every high moral virtue, — few, I say, have so lived and so stood with record so nearly stainless, with repute so slightly qualified; few, whose detractors have been so disposed, at the last, to regret their detraction; whose honest censurers so willing to review the grounds of their censure, and soften it by all allowances consistent with historic truth; whose enemies, if there were such, so ready to drop upon their bier the ready heart-blossom of a conciliated friendliness.

In considering more specifically that in the life we are contemplating which claims an especial honor, I would name, first, a fidelity to native gifts and endowments. These in him were rare; if not among the highest, if not answering to what is meant by that vague term “genius,” yet of marked and shining eminence. But the mere possession of great natural abilities has no valid claim for honor. Too often,

indeed, it receives it. The world idolizes talent. It burns incense to genius. Nor is it a tendency wholly condemnable. A certain admiration in the contemplation of high mental faculty and achievement is no less natural and legitimate than that which is inspired by the wonderful and grand in nature. Still we may not forget, that not the mere possession of great original powers, but only a due cultivation and improvement of them, has title to an honoring regard. He of whom I speak presents in himself this title in a most eminent degree ; presents, through his whole life's career, if I know it aright, a signal example of studious and pains-taking and conscientious fidelity to faculty and gift, to that splendid dower which his genius was. Nature did much for him ; but he did very much, too, for himself. His powers were capital, with which he commerced, through every realm of learning, to their continual enlargement. He was the most eminent example, perhaps, in all the land, of a skilled intellect, of the results of mental training, of the thorough and accomplished scholar. Well were it for our youth, if they would make him, in the respect named, a model for their imitation ; if, while they regard with admiration his remarkable powers, they would consider the sedulous culture, hardly less remarkable, which preceded and made possible their brilliant achievements.

But while honor is due for the mere cultivation, in



itself considered, of faculty and gift, much more is it for their exercise in behalf of high and worthy ends. Mr. Everett's career eminently demands of us this greater honor. It has been an almost unbroken term of devoted public service. Some of the dearest interests of the community, some of the highest concerns of State, some of the noblest measures of philanthropy and patriotism, stand in incalculable indebtedness, not more to his persuasive oratory, than to his wealth and profoundness of acquisition, his habitual and conscientious thoroughness of investigation, his patient and self-devoting industry. What various offices has he filled! We might almost ask what important office has he *not* filled! And with what distinguished ability! What enthusiasms of sentiment have been aroused by his appeals! What new and charming interest imparted, by his presentation and advocacy of them, to themes historical, biographical, literary, political; belonging to the domain of letters and of affairs; addressed to men of thought and of action, to the scholar and the laborer! No idler was he in this world-field; no trifler with his great and shining powers. Amidst the thronging instances of perverted talents, of desecrated genius, he stands in glorious contrast, stands as grand incitement. In order to render due honor to this fact of his career, there is need that we appreciate the peculiar temptations which beset the possessors of

brilliant and commanding gifts; which beset him, there is reason to believe, in some of their forms, with peculiar force. His love of approval and applause was a marked tendency of his nature; a love fostered and fed from early boyhood by largest measures of what it coveted. Few, probably, have lived more continually in an atmosphere of adulation. It could have been by no common strength that he rose above its snares and debilitations, and kept so greatly his manhood. And if not wholly, in certain instances, as some may think, let this which has been named, together with a natural conservatism, a constitutional timidity, a peculiar sensitiveness, and the influence of circumstances whose nature and force we may not know, — let these temper the judgment they may not wholly reverse. His honor is not that of a reformer. His place is not in that martyr-line, shining through the mists of ages, and setting athrob the heart of generations. He was not one to lead a “forlorn hope;” to do lonely battle against popular wrongs and abuses; to confront the aroused passions and prejudices of a community. His nature had not the elements for this as others have. He was shrinkingly averse from contention and opposition. He was a man for halcyon days. The very style of his oratory was adapted to such. Less the language of bold invective than of winning persuasion his lips loved, his heart prompted. He was the barque, of wondrous perfectness and

grace, nor less of high utility ; passing, with costliest freight, from point to point of the shores it hugs, making each port and inlet glad by the beauty of its presence and the blessing of its gifts ; this, rather than the “ man-of-war,” ploughing, as if in joy, the stormy seas, and belching thunders on opposing foes. And yet who of us can ever forget, what American heart can ever regard but with admiration and gratitude, the heroic nobleness with which he threw himself into our holy struggle ; the efficient, priceless services he rendered the nation’s cause ? It was a grand moral spectacle, before which all else in the past than that of which it was the fitting crown may well be forgot, — that voluntary coming forth from his retirement, which age, it may be supposed, had made desirable to him, and — with a strength and glow of intellect, an eloquence and force of utterance, unsurpassed in his palmiest days ; breaking away from party ties and associations ; heedless of whatever charges of inconsistency with his political past might be preferred against him ; heedless of every thing but the perils of his struggling country — giving himself, mind and soul, in efforts for her salvation ; nor resting therefrom till he rested in death. Fortunate for his country, fortunate for *him*, that he lived to see these years of war ; lived to gather on them new and richer harvests of renown ; to have twined for him, amidst their stormy sweep, wreaths of benediction outvying all

tributes of the past, — wreaths that shall hang perennial on his tomb. Fortunate life, — full of action, full of service, full of honor, full of varied and brilliant and beneficent achievement; closed before faculty gave sign of wane, while its evening was wearing scarcely less than the splendors of its noon; and crowned with a self-devoting patriotism, ay, and with a humanity, as beautiful, — giving the last plea of his eloquent lips for those, who, though their attitude had been that of foes, were in suffering and want; renewing, in that last public act, the exercise, in its worthiest spirit, of his earliest calling; and — making Faneuil Hall his church, and its rostrum his pulpit, and his text, “If thine enemy hunger, feed him” — preaching then and there, unconsciously but blessedly, his “farewell” to the world; closing his course beneath the sway and in the interests of that “charity” which is more than all knowledge, and all faith, and all gifts of intellect, and all deeds of valor.

I must not fail to name, as among his claims to our honoring regard, the exemplariness and purity of his private life. There was, I believe, no stain upon it, no shadow, no charge, no suspicion. Evil tongues were silent before that. There was a beauty in his daily life, — say they who knew it best, — the beauty of gentleness, humility, kindness, a thoughtfulness of others’ feelings, a readiness for all befriending service; the beauty of an unassuming dignity, of an unaffected

simplicity, of a moderation which knew no excess, of an integrity which knew no wavering. The uncorrupt statesman, he was the uncorrupt and uncorruptible man. If Washington, if the malign influences that lurk within the nation's capital, could not corrupt him, what could? And they could not. Honor to him who could come forth from that ordeal, after twelve years' subjection to it, with no smell of fire upon his garments! Let his example plead with our public men for those virtues, public and private, whose absence no station, no rank, no talent can atone for; while their presence is the adorning crown of all talent and rank and station!

Nor can I omit to name his habitually manifested respect for religion and its institutions. He never failed in his attendance upon their stated ministrations. No pressure of labors, no exigency of affairs, no need of recreation, no love of books, were enough to make Sunday to him other than a day for religious rest and public worship. Nor was the respect merely outward, given as gracious patronage of a useful institution,—given on the miserable ground of “example's sake,” as by the educated and distinguished it often is,—as if they did not need religion far more than religion needs them; did not need it absolutely and peculiarly,—its guidance, its sanctions, its restraints. It was with him, too evidently to be doubted, a respect innate and heart-born, deepened by a sense of per-

sonal insufficiency and need. No one could see him in the House of God, and not be struck with his devout demeanor; his respectful attention, however humble the utterance, to the spoken word.

Thus "the Lord hath taken away from (*our*) Jerusalem and Judah the stay and the staff, the honorable man and the counsellor, and the eloquent orator." The State, the nation, mourn him. There is a sense of loss in his decease as of a presence that could not be spared; as of a pillar of public confidence, a leader of public sentiment, withdrawn when most needed. So many were accustomed to look to him for guidance, to lean upon his judgment, to wait his lead. His word was influence; his name, a spell; his presence, a host. His loss is felt in anticipation of that work to which the nation will soon be summoned, of political reconstruction and re-adjustment; a work perilously glorious, demanding the wisest experience and the soundest statesmanship, and in which that conservatism, of which he was a recognized representative, will be a needed element, — as indeed it always is, to keep in safe and healthful check the radical tendencies of our national life. And yet why mourn him thus despondingly? For God takes care of his generations; and who knows what souls of noble mould, and more fully attuned to the key-note of the coming day, he may have in training for it!

There are, also, natural regrets that, for his own

sake, he should not have lived to see what he so longed and labored for,—a restored and peace-cemented Union. But he saw the rosy streaks that foretell the dawn. The latest watches of the night had come. The surging storm had lulled. And who will say that death veils to the immortals the scenes of their earthly toils ; the progress of those interests, dear to Heaven, for which here they lived and pleaded? Who will say that the book of human fortunes is thenceforth sealed to those desiring eyes? I believe it not.

And, looking from that yonder world to this, how must all else seem unimportant, to its newly-risen dwellers, in their life's record, compared with what they did, or sought to do, in fidelity to sacred duty and Heaven-committed trusts! Oh, what a poor and empty thing is life, viewed only in its earthly aspects and results, — poor and empty even with those who have won its brightest smile and worn its loftiest honors! What is it? A birth, a welcome, a shout,—popularity, station, fame; a funeral, a eulogy, a statue, a name! What is there, after all, worth living for but the approval of conscience, the smile of God, the interior and eternal wealth of a loving heart and a holy will? Friends, will we not live for these more steadfastly and devotedly, in our several spheres,—the humblest and narrowest of them great, in its opportunities and possibilities? Will we not,

each, so heed the Great Master's call, "Occupy till I come," that we shall hear, at last, — sweeter than the million-voiced echo of human praise, — those words of gracious approval and unfathomed import, "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord"?



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BY NATHANIEL HALL.

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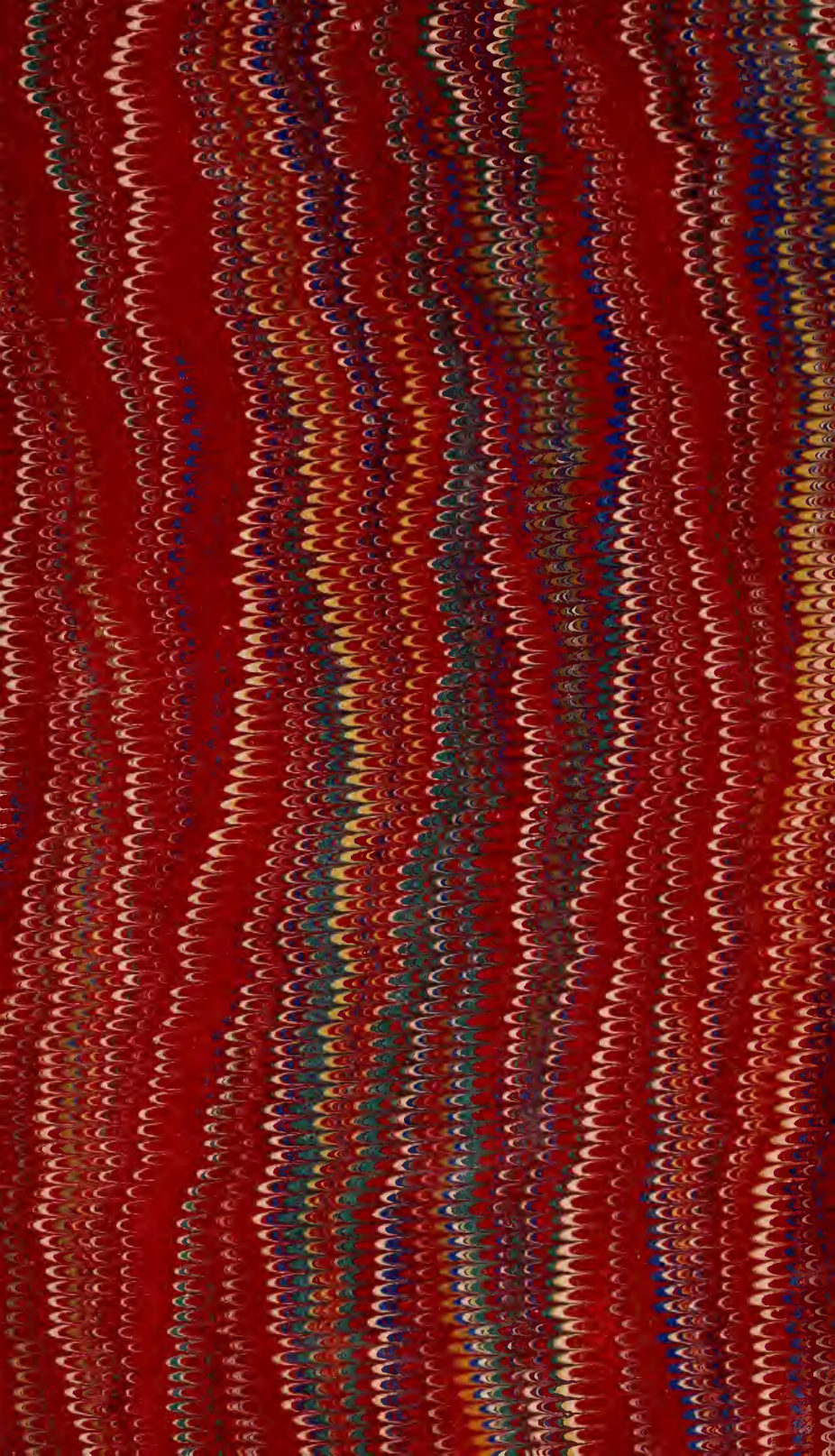












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